

WLBT/WJDX Radio Broadcast

WLBT telephone calls

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

Post Office Box 571

Jackson., Mississippi 39205

AU/MP 1980.01.185

Participant(s): Beard, Fred; Smith, Hazel Brannon

Description: Track 1: Fred Beard calls NBC about GM Advertising pull based on "Bonanza" having integrated casting. Also "11th Hour" having characters portray interracial intercourse / Track 2: Electors / Track 3: Hazel Smith phone call to WLBT

AU/MP1980.01.185: TRACK 1

SPEAKER 1: Hello.

BEARD: Yeah.

SPEAKER 1: Hello, Fred.

BEARD: How are you doing?

SPEAKER 1: I'm fine. How are you today?

BEARD: Doing a lot of traveling?

SPEAKER 1: Yes, been out a little bit last week and got back Tuesday night and came in the office yesterday afternoon.

BEARD: Well, good. Bill, the reason I'm calling...I've already called and talked with the only man up there...I think it's Burkhalter

SPEAKER 1: Joe Burkhalter on [inaudible]

BEARD: Right. And I just wanted to touch bases with you on the thing.

SPEAKER 1: Uh huh.

BEARD: I've talked with Dumas Milner. 'Course, he was...happened to be in New York and he was going to follow through with General Motors on the thing. We, of course, concerned of the affect that now if they integrate Bonanza, the affect it will have on General Motors considering the other problem that has been created down here with the public [occurrence] and also the affect...the unnatural affect it will have with bringing a Negro into the program where it's definitely obvious that it's no natural thing to have a Negro back in those days. Now, I'm sure they'll be using [inaudible] as an Indian or something else. But we feel like it's a serious mistake, not only for the program, but for General Motors. I realize that y'all are far removed from the general feeling about a time like this in the civil rights [inaudible]

SPEAKER 1: No, I'm not removed from it, because I'm well aware of it.

BEARD: Is there anything that can be done about it?

SPEAKER 1: Fred, I don't know of a thing. They've gone ahead and they're, you know, they're shooting it. They're going to put it on. It's a one time only. And you know, I don't know what you can do but just not carry it

BEARD: Well, of course I wouldn't carry it.

SPEAKER 1: No, you can't.

BEARD: But I feel like that everybody will know why we're not carrying it, and the affect will be the same, and it's spreading throughout a number of other areas besides here. 'Course I've lived with this thing and have really taken a beating regarding it and have defended NBC and General Motors in my letters that I've sent out. And the position that we're in, I have defended all the way through. Now, I don't know who you can talk to or where you go with a thing like this, but, somewhere along the line, I really feel like that NBC needs to give the Southern stations some kind of a policy of what they're doing to us. Did you see 'The Eleventh Hour' last night?

SPEAKER 1: No, I did not. I know of the program. 'How is the Battle to be Fought?' or some such thing, wasn't it?

BEARD: No, this was regarding a Negro man and a White woman who is supposed to be Negro, maybe one eighth Negro, but you wouldn't know it [inaudible]

SPEAKER 1: Oh, she was the personnel director?

BEARD: Yeah.

SPEAKER 1: And he is a down-and-out writer?

BEARD: Right.

SPEAKER 1: And she lives in a fashionable White neighborhood, I believe.

BEARD: Yeah.

SPEAKER 1: And he has a room or an apartment in a ghetto or something.

BEARD: Yeah. That was a...and they show them in bed together...

SPEAKER 1: Uh huh.

BEARD: ...kissing and then show her getting up after having intercourse and all that kind of business.

SPEAKER 1: Well, [inaudible]

BEARD: It...It's...we've dropped to an all-time low in what we're doing and Bill,

it's gotten to the point now...for example, last night with me, 'cause, naturally, you can imagine what happened to me at home from people and even to the coming out to the house and coming up in the front and cursing me and things like that. When that starts happening to you, you're to the point where you've got to stop carrying those kind of programs.

SPEAKER 1: I don't blame you, Fred. You can't have that. That's terrible. I mean, your family is, you know, in danger with something like that.

BEARD: If NBC would go ahead and give us some indication of what their policy is going to be and of course we've got to do it with ABC, on these programs, and alert us to how bad or how good they're going to be...in other words, Negro entertainment is such, a Negro on the program as such that doesn't get involved with these intimate, social things that are nauseating to everybody, I think you can live with them. In other words, they've got to be policemen or they've got to be detectives or they got to have them in scenes...that's one thing. They've got to have them as entertainers as long as they don't get into an intimate connection with the White entertainer.

SPEAKER 1: But, supposedly, both of these...the gal is a Negro that was on that show last night.

BEARD: Oh yeah. Right.

SPEAKER 1: So, you know, their argument...and, you know, you're...you say, well, why...but why do you have to have it? And, Fred, you know, I agree with you. Why do you have to have it? I don't know. But they...every network is not NBC. It's ABC. It's CBS. They're definitely going ahead with this procedure of...

BEARD: Is there any stated policy or could they give us one...

SPEAKER 1: There's no policy that I'm aware of and...

BEARD: Well now you're of course aware of what the unions have done and the NAACP have done to the advertising agencies and to the Hollywood producers.

SPEAKER 1: Right.

BEARD: And they're requiring a Negro on every show.

SPEAKER 1: Right.

BEARD: And of course everybody's aware of that throughout the country.

- SPEAKER 1: And I think that's what you're going to find everybody, you know, obviously, having to live with right up and down the line.
- BEARD: Well, I think that, of course, the play last night was as if all right now, this is our colored play for this month. Now, this is obvious what we're doing, and this is the purpose of what we're doing. It was...he was a very poor actor. It was more like a high school play.
- SPEAKER 1: Um umm.
- BEARD: It was...it was downright funny. It was so amateurish with his acting. Now, he might be the greatest actor in the world, but it was...it was reminded me of high school plays that I've seen.
- SPEAKER 1: Uh huh.
- BEARD: But Bill, you as my contact, I've got to know where I'm going and what I'm going to do.
- SPEAKER 1: Well, certainly, all of us here are aware of, you know, your call-in on the [Jet] cover and he, Joe Berkhalter, the fellow he was in touch with [inaudible] director of nighttime programming, and what I will do is...the only thing I can do, Fred, frankly, is go to Tom who, you know, has the hear and the immediate hear of, you know, everybody in the top brass level.
- BEARD: See, from our standpoint down here, it's a lot better for the advertisers that the program is never shown, because it hurts them. Chevrolet is hurt badly down here and is hurting, I'm sure, will be hurting in other sections as this other thing comes about. Buick was one of the advertisers last night on this show, and Buick was [inaudible] the other Buick dealer was concerned about the fact of what affect it would have on him.
- SPEAKER 1: Right.
- BEARD: Now, from our standpoint down here, we're a lot better off not to have the programs on and hurt our advertisers or hurt the people who are trying to sell products and have these things develop.
- SPEAKER 1: Sure.
- BEARD: So, I think that somewhere along the line at the source...the network has got to come up with a notice. We recommend that this program not be shown to Southern audiences...
- SPEAKER 1: Oh, they'll never do that.

- BEARD: ...until the managers have a opportunity to see the program. Now, you tell me that you definitely don't think Adam Clayton Powell should be shown at the end of the show last night. They came up with not only a sound promotion of Adam Clayton Powell, but a visual promotion of Adam Clayton Powell right at the end of the show which is no way in the world to cut out of it.
- SPEAKER 1: No, they'll promote it to pieces.
- BEARD: But normally, it's just visual, I mean, just audio which you can fade out of, but this was a visual deal last night. Bill, we're coming so fast in this country to the point where the majority is appeasing and operating for the Negro race.
- SPEAKER 1: Umm.
- BEARD: And that's what we're ending up with.
- SPEAKER 1: Well, listen, are you going...you'll be up here in NAB, won't you?
- BEARD: Yeah, but this is something I've got to have a decision on before I get to the NAB. This program's coming up here before long. I don't know what the date of it is on this [jet] program. But we're hitting these things cold turkey, and it's a bad situation from our standpoint of hitting them and not knowing we're going to hit them or not knowing how bad they are. Somebody somewhere knows what's going on with these programs before they're sent out, and, if we could be alerted...
- SPEAKER 1: Well, you've got a storyline...
- BEARD: I know, Bill, but you don't know whether it's good or bad. In other words, somebody that has seen it has discretion to say we think that the station in Alabama or Mississippi or Louisiana or Texas or wherever it might be...or South Carolina is just as bad as we are...and I say bad...somebody's got to alert them to what's going on. It's not fair to the advertiser to put him in the position that he's trying to come into this area and spend his money and do some good when it would be a lot better for him to drop this particular show, or the next show or whatever it is. In other words, I'm sure General Motors would appreciate it. I'm sure Buick would have appreciated, in these circumstances, that they not be involved.
- SPEAKER 1: This is a...what you have...you have...as always, you're articulate, Fred, and you spell it out well, the situation and the problems involved. What I would like to have is a letter spelling out just what you've been telling me about the advertisers. Give me something that I can walk, you know, hand walk into an office with.

BEARD: All right.

SPEAKER 1: And just along, you know, what you've been saying.

BEARD: Well, and if you would also pass on, 'cause you can express yourself better talking than you can in letters, 'cause you get so involved in trying to clarify and not misinterpret what you're saying in writing, whereas, right now, I think you fully understand what I'm saying and my attitude about it.

SPEAKER 1: I do.

BEARD: In other words, I realize that what the trend is in the country from the pressures on the networks and the pressures on the advertising agencies and everybody else. But, at the same time, that if, somewhere along the line, they realize that it's to the advantage of the advertiser not to be in a certain program, then the network should be able to keep them out of it to keep from hurting them in those areas.

SPEAKER 1: Right. And, you know, spell out how, you know, Chevrolet's dealers have been hurt in Jackson.

BEARD: Well, if you would, in the meantime, 'cause I just can't take a letter like that and write it off of the top of my head without rewriting and rewriting on it.

SPEAKER 1: I will, in the meantime, go in...right now as you hang up...well, I'll go talk to Tom, because [inaudible]

BEARD: Who is the next people up the line...a long line...does he talk with Mert...Mort Werner or with David Scott?

SPEAKER 1: No, no. It'd be with Mort Werner and with, oh, you know, all the powers...

BEARD: You know where we got our alert to some of these things going on?

SPEAKER 1: Where?

BEARD: A call from some of the crew at Bonanza.

SPEAKER 1: Is that right?

BEARD: Yeah. They...they...the crew called down here and said, "We want to alert you to what's happening to us." He said, "We've got a new Negro star." He said, "We're as unhappy about the situation [inaudible] when she walked on the set on there, they said, "Well, here's our new leading lady."

SPEAKER 1: [inaudible]

BEARD: Of course, those guys can't say anything. Hell, they'd get fired the next second.

SPEAKER 1: Right.

BEARD: But...but some of them got enough sense to say, "Let's go alert somebody to what they're getting ready to do."

SPEAKER 1: Yeah, will, they...they...

BEARD: And that's what happened.

SPEAKER 1: Yeah, they admitted it was a one time only, didn't they?

BEARD: No, they didn't know that.

SPEAKER 1: [inaudible] that might be regular cast?

BEARD: Well, that...that...the crew, you know, wouldn't know that.

SPEAKER 1: Ok, well, I will go talk, and you, in turn, when you can, give me a letter.

BEARD: All right.

SPEAKER 1: And, then, let's try to follow this thing more so in Chicago.

BEARD: Right.

SPEAKER 1: ...'cause we have all kinds of people out there.

BEARD: Do you think a thing like this ought to be brought out on to the floor at an NBC meeting where we have affiliates meeting?

SPEAKER 1: Gee, I don't see what that would accomplish. I really don't. I think, you know, you talking with other Southern operators giving your opinion [inaudible] gathering here [inaudible] help to you [inaudible]

BEARD: Well, down here it's just going to put us in a [inaudible]. Of course, our audience is going to get less and less. And the advertisers that promote things like this, it's going to hurt their business.

SPEAKER 1: They should be feeling it [inaudible].

BEARD: Well, they are feeling it.

SPEAKER 1: But, I mean, you know, so far we've had no [indications] in sales that, you know, General Motors is unhappy [where they're] losing out...

BEARD: Well, General Motors is unhappy, because I was talking to Dumas and I don't know whether you know who he is or not, but he's the largest General Motors dealer in the world. And he says that General Motors has been talking to NBC and NBC has told them that the clients are not going to determine what the content is on the program.

SPEAKER 1: Fred, you're going to have, I think, in a situation like this, passing the buck. You know, the advertisers...

BEARD: Their blaming it all on NBC.

SPEAKER 1: ...NBC and NBC will say, you know, the advertising agency [inaudible]...

BEARD: Yeah, they're all passing it to each other.

SPEAKER 1: Everybody around the [circle].

BEARD: Well, I'll send you a letter, and if you could follow through on it between now and the letter, I'd appreciate it.

SPEAKER 1: Will do.

BEARD: On alerting me on other programs.

SPEAKER 1: I will as I, you know, as they come to my attention.

BEARD: Yeah. Well, I'd appreciate it if you'd set something up at the source somewhere.

SPEAKER 1: I know it.

BEARD: Ok, thank you.

SPEAKER 1: Bye.

[Several people talking, but inaudible]

We're faced with a much different situation now than we were four years ago in that we have men in the South who represent something we can [inaudible] or we didn't four years ago. We [hadn't run] we were labeled [inaudible] electorals in Louisiana. Some of the people [inaudible], because

we didn't have a...we didn't have a candidate. An independent ticket
[inaudible]

END OF TRACK 1

AUMP1980.01.185: TRACK 2

SMITH: ...or whatever you call it. It's a...I've...I've...I've had a complaint today. Hazel Smith called and said that you have attacked her twice, and she said that she was [no lesbian] and she doesn't appreciate being called one.

BEARD: All right. Uh huh.

SMITH: And...and, then, you just use your own judgment about what else you say.

BEARD: All right.

SMITH: My only point, I mean, I don't want to be ugly or talk badly to you or anyone else because I realize you didn't have anything to do with it.

BEARD: No, because I can't control what any of them say as you know.

SMITH: But I feel like this. If he does say something like that, I mean, if he says anything else like that tonight well then, I am going to demand some equal time or something...

BEARD: Well, now on this political deal of course you can buy time, but when they pay for it, then we have to sell it. In other words, you can't get on without buying it, but I'll sure see that you get the time made available to you.

SMITH: Well, I mean the thing about it is that's slander. That's nothing but slander.

BEARD: Uh huh.

SMITH: And a man, I don't care...I mean, as a Lieutenant Governor of a state well I mean, he shouldn't slander any citizen. I mean, after all, he is supposedly my public servant and your public servant.

BEARD: That's true.

SMITH: He shouldn't go around slandering anybody. And, I mean, now, if he had...

BEARD: Have you...have you come out to anybody for Governor yet:

SMITH: Today, this week, I just...I just said that Coleman was the man. But, I mean, I had never even mentioned [inaudible].

BEARD: In other words, I mean, prior to today you hadn't come out for anybody.

SMITH: No, uh uh. No, uh uh. And, actually, I'm not saying I'm for him now. I mean, I'm just pointing out that I say he will steer us safely in the years ahead or a general thing like that. I'm not saying I endorse him. I didn't even say I was going to vote for him.

BEARD: Uh huh.

SMITH: But, I mean, I reviewed his administration and so forth, but that's [that's been my issue] as of today, Thursday, see.

BEARD: Uh huh.

SMITH: And, prior to this time, I hadn't said one word about Johnson or [inaudible] or Coleman or anybody else.

BEARD: Well now Hazel, are you considering maybe suing him if he said anything.

SMITH: Oh, heavens no. Well, if he said anything bad enough, I might. I mean, I don't want to go around suing people if that's what you mean.

BEARD: Yeah, 'cause you're in the newspaper business. You don't want to get involved in that yourself

SMITH: Oh, well, I mean, I'm not, I mean, I'm not that kind of person. I mean, to go around suing people anyway. But, I mean, what I mean is, I mean, after all, decent people just don't do things like that, Fred. I mean, you know that as well as I do. I mean, that's just not fair. And, I mean, I believe in being fair to people.

BEARD: All right. Well, I will certainly see that he gets the word. Now, I'll be perfectly frank with you. I didn't even realize that he was going to be on the station tonight, but I haven't been following it too closely, 'cause we've been having somebody every night in the week practically.

SMITH: Oh, I know it.

BEARD: Hold on and let me check and see what time...what time is...

SMITH: It's 8 to 8:30, I believe.

BEARD: ...is Coleman, I mean, is Johnson going to be on tonight? Is he going to be on for sure? Yeah, he's going to be on. That's all I need to know.

SMITH: Well, I read the ad in the paper this morning, and I think it's 8 to 8:30.

BEARD: Ok.

SMITH: Well, I mean, the main thing is just to let him get the word, I mean, but, after all, I mean, he's supposed to be a man of dignity and he's supposed to be the Lieutenant Governor of the state.

BEARD: Well, now, if he's on live and he comes in here, I'll certainly see that he gets the word. Now, it might be that he's already filmed a video tape of what he was going to say.

SMITH: Uh huh.

BEARD: But I will certainly see that he....He's going to be on at eight? Is it live? It's live as far as we know unless they bring something in.

SMITH: And I think it's statewide, too, see.

BEARD: All right.

SMITH: I mean, I think this same ad has WJTV and...

BEARD: Alright. We're originating the network at 8 o'clock.

SMITH: I never look at anything but WLBT, because that's the station I keep turning to all the time, and I hardly even look at the other stations.

BEARD: Well, good. Well, I'm glad to hear that.

SMITH: Well ok Fred.

BEARD: Well, thank you, Hazel, and I well certainly see that he gets the word.

SMITH: Ok.

BEARD: All right.

SMITH: You just tell him...just say what have I ever done to him?

BEARD: All right.

SMITH: You tell him I said for you to ask him that. What the heck have I ever done

to him?

BEARD: All right. I will certainly see that he gets the word.

SMITH: Ok good. Thank you a lot, hear?

BEARD: Bye.

SMITH: Bye.

END OF TRACK 2

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